

# Week 1

## Introduction

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The aim of this week is to look at some of the big themes we are going to explore as we seek to rediscover community through this series.

### Begin

Read Colossians 3:12-17 and 4:2-3 and pray.

Take a few moments to discuss these questions:

1. What is a community?
2. What or who is your community?
3. What is the best thing about your community?
4. How could it be better?

### Clothes:

In verses 12-14 Paul describes us as being God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved.

5. Thinking about each of those words in verse 12, what does it mean to you to be chosen, to know you are holy and to know you are dearly loved?
6. What difference does it make to your life?

We are told to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, to bear with one another, to forgive and love.

7. How can we clothe ourselves with these qualities? What helps us to do this? What makes it harder?
8. Why do you think Paul uses that particular word clothe? What is it about clothes that make it a valid word to use here? Think about what physical clothes do. How does this apply to these clothes?
9. How do you see these qualities being expressed in your community?

# Week 1 (continued)

## Introduction

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### Presence:

Verses 15-16

10. What impact does it have on us to have Christ ruling and living in us?
11. What do others see when this happens?

Spend a couple of minutes telling each other what you can see of Christ in them. This could be in 2s and 3s if that is easier.

### Actions:

Chapters 3:17 and 4:2-3

12. What else does Paul say about how we should live in these verses?
13. What would this look like if we were to live in this way and what impact would it have on your community?

### Reflection:

14. Thinking about everything you have talked about today what is stirring in your heart? What will you do about it?

Over the coming weeks we will begin to explore further what community is. Is there anyone you want to invite to join you for food next time?

### Prayer:

- Pray for each other that God will lead, guide and inspire you as you meet together.
- Pray that he will clothe you in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
- Pray that he will continue his work of changing us to reflect more of Jesus.
- Pray that he will open doors.

## Week 2

### Eating Together

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Jesus loved mealtimes!

How many occasions can you think of when Jesus shared a meal with others? Look them up in the Bible if you're not sure.

**This week we want you to take time to eat together and get to know each other better.**

Healthy families eat together which is why we want communities to do this too. Keep it as simple and as natural as you can. This isn't about putting on a show or even 'hosting' but just about sharing food together.

Encourage each other to behave as a healthy family would; share your favourite recipes as you decide what to do, exchange cooking tips as you prepare the food (don't let one person cook for everyone else) and make sure that everyone has a part to play in clearing up!

Below are some ideas of simple questions that can be used to get meaningful conversation flowing during your meal. Pick one, or come up with your own idea!

#### Conversation Starters:

- What are you thankful for?
- Who has been influential in your life?
- What were you like as a child? Or if you have children with you, ask them to describe what they think they will be like as an adult!
- What gives you joy?
- Who is the bravest person you know?
- What is your best quality?
- What have you relied on today?
- What is the best book you have ever read?
- What would you most like to change in the world?

## Week 3

### Prayer, Worship and the Bible

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Paul's heart in his letter to the Colossian church is that they would get a bigger vision of Jesus. Read 1:15-20 to see just how big Paul's vision of Jesus is!

His longing for the Colossians is that they would live Christ-centred lives, beholding His beauty, surrendering themselves to His will, and that through that, they would experience truly fruitful and joy-filled lives.

*So then, he says in 2:6-7, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

The same is true for us as God's people today. We are called not just as individuals but corporately to live Christ-centred lives.

We are given **three precious tools**, or disciplines, to help us to increase our vision of Jesus and help us live lives 'rooted and built up in Him': **the Bible, prayer and worship** (for the purposes of the this study we are referring to sung worship).

**The purpose of this study is to consider what these can look like in a community or family context.**

Consider the call of Colossians 2:6-8.

1. How do the Bible, prayer and worship help us to live lives 'rooted and built up in Christ'? Just share some initial thoughts before we dig into each area more deeply.

2. Think about how these three disciplines look in an individual context and in a corporate context (e.g. a Sunday morning). How are they the same? How are they different?

Read Colossians 3:16.

The 'message of Christ' or 'word of Christ' refers to Jesus' own teaching

## Week 3 (continued)

### Prayer, Worship and the Bible

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and the teaching about Him: in other words, the whole of Scripture.

3. What does it mean for Scripture to 'dwell in us richly'? How would that enable us to be 'rooted and built up in Christ'?
4. How does Scripture enable us to teach and admonish each other with all wisdom? What might this look like in a community or family context?
5. What things should characterise our worship according to this passage? How does worshipping like this help us to grow in Christ?
6. How according to this passage do Scripture and worship fuel each other?

Read Colossians 4:2.

7. What does it mean to 'devote' ourselves to prayer? Is this something we can easily say about ourselves? What things get in the way?
8. According to this passage, what does a devoted prayer life look like?
9. How can we be 'watchful' in our prayer lives as individuals and as a community/family? What sort of things are we being watchful for?

Thankfulness features in all three of these passages. As we respond to the call of 2:6-7 to live lives rooted and built up in Christ, we will be 'overflowing with thankfulness', we are called to worship 'with gratitude in our hearts' (3:16) and we are to be thankful in our prayers (4:2). It seems that thankfulness is key to these three disciplines and to experiencing the fruitful and joy-filled lives God has for us.

10. Take a moment to reflect individually on your own thankfulness. Would you consider yourself to be a thankful person,

## Week 3 (continued)

### Prayer, Worship and the Bible

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or do you find it difficult? What things do you find help you in your thankfulness? What things get in the way?

11. Once everyone has had some time to reflect, it could be helpful to share some of these thoughts as a group.

You may wish to move into a time of response as a community or family, using one or some of these three disciplines. Some ideas to help:

- Have someone read Colossians 1:15-23 out to the group and then use it to fuel a time of thankful prayers.
- Have a time of sung worship, particularly using songs rooted in Scripture. If no one in your group can play an instrument you could use a YouTube video (which often have the words) or simply play a recorded track and listen to it together.
- If your community or family includes children (or you just feel creative!) you could do some post-it note prayers - get people to write things they are thankful for on post-it notes and stick them onto a 'thankfulness wall'. You could play some worship music while people do this!

## Week 4

### Reaching Out

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God created humans out of a desire to share His abundant, overflowing love which has existed in the Trinity for all eternity. His desire to draw others into that love is not only what motivated Him to create, but also ultimately to save through His son Jesus.

The Father wants to have a big family and when we become part of it we get to join in with the 'family business' of inviting others to be part of this amazing family too!

Healthy families are ones that grow; this mirrors, in some ways God's desire to grow His family too. There are lots of ways families grow but for **the purpose of this week we want to think about how families grow numerically as new people join them.**

Read Colossians 4:3 and see Paul's radical focus on reaching people: *'And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.'*

This is a radical request; Paul is in prison, chained up and he asks for an open door to proclaim the gospel. He doesn't ask for freedom or a change in his conditions but for the advance of the gospel!

1. As you reflect on this, how does this make you feel?

As we think about telling others about Jesus it usually provokes mixed emotions. If you have people in your community that are more wired for this they will be excited. Others may be feeling afraid, uncertain or perhaps guilty for not being very good at this.

Jesus knows this and in Luke's gospel He gives some really helpful teaching to His 72 disciples that takes the pressure off them focusing on their performance, and puts the emphasis back on focusing on what God is doing and them joining Him.

What's the big idea here?

## Week 4 (continued)

### Reaching Out

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Jesus wants His disciples to **look for the person of peace.**

*Read Luke 10:1-7. and pray. (There's lots here so we're just going to pick out the key points of Jesus' teaching on evangelism)*

2. When Jesus sends people out on His mission does He expect this to be a solo endeavour (v.1)? Do you think of reaching out as something done primarily by yourself or with others?

3. Although the disciples are going two-by-two, someone is going before them. Who is it? How does this affect us as we think about going and reaching out? (v.1)

4. What should the disciples do as they go? (v.2).

5. What should disciples of Jesus expect as we seek to reach out? (v.3). *Note: It's not possible to identify a person of peace without identifying people who are not of peace!* How can we remain bold and resilient even when we experience rejection?

6. What does verse 4 tell us about the attitudes and behaviours of disciples as they go? How focused are we on reaching out? Do we get easily distracted?

7. As we are seeking people of peace we need to look for **three identifying behaviours** in the next few verses:

i) Look for people who **welcome you** (v.5). Simply put, can you be friends with them?

ii) Look for people who you get along with when they **know you are a Christian** (v.6). How good are you at being open about your faith?

iii) Finally, look for people who will **support you in mission** (v.7). This can seem counterintuitive as we often think of reaching out as us serving others, this is true, but as we pray and talk about Jesus, people open up and will often be interested in

## Week 4 (continued)

### Reaching Out

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things we are doing.

*Note: It's unusual to meet someone who displays all of these behaviours as soon as you meet them. You will need to be wise about investing in relationships where you see God at work in different ways. Remember, you are free to spend more time with some people than others.*

8. If we see God at work in someone, what is the principle that we should draw out here? (v.7) Are you quick to move on from people because God isn't working as fast as you'd like?

So the big idea is to **look for the person of peace** and stick with them.

#### Application

9. Think over your journey of faith. Can you see how you displayed these behaviours?

10. Take some time as a community or family to pray and write down who your people of peace are, or who you think they are. If you are struggling to think of anyone then ask God to be revealing people of peace to you.

11. It's likely that at least one or two people in your community will have been able to think of a person of peace. Over the next few weeks, come up with a plan to introduce that person to one other person from your community. Do something natural with them that you enjoy. Make the goal achievable (e.g. they got to know another Christian and liked them rather than we met up and baptised them - that's a good goal but maybe too high a bar for most people at this point)

You will need to revisit this idea over and over again in order to embed it into your community and family life.

## Week 5

### Sharing Life

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**This week we are going to ask you to explore what it means to 'share life'.** Culturally we are told that we can be self-sufficient and that this is something to aspire to.

To be dependable is considered a very positive trait, yet the world tells us that we shouldn't have to depend on anyone and that we are weak if we do. What a confused message!

The Bible gives us another way - one that gives us a richness of life that can't be found in a life of isolation and self-sufficiency.

*Read Romans 12:4-7 and pray*

1. What has God given us that can be shared with each other and with others?

2. Can you think of anything else that God gives us and that can be shared with others?

3. What specific gifts (and things and experiences) has God given to the people in your community? Make an inventory of how God has blessed your community: intellectual gifts, spiritual gifts, practical gifts, financial blessings. How could you use these to serve each other and your people of peace (see week 4 if you haven't done it already)?

*Read Ephesians 4:11-16*

4. What is the purpose of the gifts that God gives us?

5. What possible impact could your community's inventory of gifts have?

#### Pray

- That God would give you opportunities to share the gifts you have been given and for the impact that this way-of-life could have.
- For God's provision, that He would provide other gifts for us to share.

## Week 6

### Having Fun

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**Have some fun together this week.** The aim of this is for your community or family to explore rest and recreation (the word literally means re-creation, i.e. this recreates you in the image of God.)

In Genesis 2:2-3 God rested, this is where we find the beginning of the Sabbath principle. We see Jesus resting and reclining in scripture. He went to parties and weddings He even took time to eat fish and chat with His friends on the seashore - see John 21:12-13.

Proverbs 17:22 says that laughter is medicine that is good for the heart and Ecclesiastes 3:4 that there is a time to laugh!

So the objective of this week is to simply to have fun together, to stop and rest from the regular and be refreshed.

Here are just three ideas:

1. Walk through/along the autumn woods/seashore together and take some hot drinks and cakes/picnic with you. Pause at some point and enjoy God's creation and thank Him for who He is and what He has done. Invite a friend!
2. Bring out the board games! Use games that encourage togetherness, teamwork and that are fun and relaxing, not too competitive or that go on forever! Here are some of our favourites - frustration, scrabble, twister, quizzes, card games or interactive games on the Wii! Invite a friend!
3. Go ten pin bowling! It's always great fun! Grab some chips and end with a short walk around the marina. Invite a friend!

## Week 7

### Reflection

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It's the final week, we're so glad you've made it this far! We hope you've enjoyed these activities and that God has spoken to you through them.

To end the series, this final activity will lead you through some reflection on the past and get you to look to what God has planned for you next.

You'll need some supplies:

- Some post-it notes
- Pens
- A wall, window, or door to stick them on

**Leaders:** Make sure you get these ready before your community meets, or ask someone else to get them for you.

You'll be using these to help you reflect on the studies and activities you've been doing from this booklet and from the *Rediscovering Community* sermon series.

Colossians 4:2 says "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful", and we'll be putting some of that into practice...

#### Part One - Thanking God

God will have been working through this series, and this part of the activity is a chance for us to thank Him for what He has been doing!

#### Instructions:

Take a few minutes to write two things that you are thankful to God for in this series (one on each post-it note). It might be helpful to recap the different things you've done if people seem like they can't remember.

When everyone is ready, each person should go and stick them up on the wall and read out what they've put.

## Week 7 (continued)

### Reflection

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Once everyone has put their post-it notes up on the wall, spend a few minutes thanking and praising God for all the things on the wall.

#### Part Two - Remembering

We are expecting that God will have been speaking to you through this series. This part of the activity is to help us be watchful looking back and remember what He's said and done.

#### Instructions:

Now, take a few minutes to write:

- two things that have most stood out to you or that God has shown you from the study or sermon series
- and the two things that have surprised you the most from this series (that's four post-it notes each in total)

Then, as before, each person can read them out and stick them up on (a different part of) the wall!

Once that's done, spend some time praying, asking God to really cement into people's lives the things that God has shown them and asking Him to teach us all how to apply those things to our lives as individuals, and as a group.

#### Part Three - What's Next?

This final part of the activity is to help us be watchful looking forward, seeking God's guidance for what's next.

#### Instructions:

Ask God to speak to each person about what you should do next. Spend a few minutes in silence waiting for God to speak.

After the time is up, write the things God has asked you to do next on

## Week 7 (continued)

### Reflection

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another post-it note, but this time keep the post-it note and take it home, perhaps sticking them to the cover of your Bibles or phones.

**Leaders:** Depending on what God has said, it might be appropriate to share with the rest of the community and pray into those things a bit more.

*As leaders of the community, God might prompt you for some next steps for your community. These may or may not be appropriate to share right now, or they might require some more thought and prayer with the person / people you lead your community with.*

# Notes Page

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